

Message Text

SECRET

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41

ACTION SS-25

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R 231633Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2817

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USCINCEUR

CINCPAC

CINCLANT

S E C R E T LONDON 08459

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, UK, US

SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA

REF: (A) LONDON 7824; (B) STATE 139637

1. POLITICAL COUNSELOR HAS RECEIVED FOLLOW-UP LETTER DATED 16 JULY 73 FROM CLIVE ROSE (ASST. UNDERSECRETARY, FCO):

"IN MY LETTER OF 5 JULY I MENTIONED THAT, THOUGH WE HAVE NO OBJECTION IN PRINCIPLE TO YOUR PROPOSALS FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY ON DIEGO GARCIA, THERE WERE SOME POINTS OF DETAIL WHICH WE SHOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS FURTHER. THERE ARE TWO PARTICULAR POINTS, NAMELY, WHETHER BRITISH FIRMS WILL BE ABLE TO BID FOR CONTRACTS; AND THE QUESTION OF OUR PROVIDING EXTRA PERSONNEL.

"ON THE QUESTION OF CONTRACTS, WE ARE OF COURSE AWARE OF THE TERMS OF ARTICLE 7 OF THE 1966 EXCHANGE OF NOTES. WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED ENQUIRIES FROM BRITISH FIRMS WISHING TO TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION WORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIOT FACILITIES AND WE HOPE VERY MUCH THE CLAIMS OF SUCH FIRMS WILL BE BORNE IN MIND WHEN CONTRACTS FOR THE EXPANSION ARE BEING ALLOTTED. I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL TO KNOW

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WHETHER YOUR GOVERNMENT PROPOSE TO OPEN THESE CONTRACTS

TO COMPETITIVE TENDER AND WILL INVITE BIDS FROM BRITISH FIRMS. AS FOR THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ARE STILL CONSIDERING THE FINANCIAL AND MANNING IMPLICATIONS OF THIS PROPOSAL, AND I FEAR IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE THEY CAN GIVE A FINAL ANSWER. I UNDERSTAND HOWEVER THAT THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN SOME CONTACT ON THE NAVY TO NAVY NET AND, IF YOU AGREE, I SUGGEST WE LEAVE THIS PARTICULAR ASPECT TO BE PURSUED ON THAT BASIS."

2. WE PLAN RESPOND TO POINT ON CONSTRUCTION WORK ALONG LINES OUTLINED REF (B) WHICH, FROM INFORMAL CONTACTS AT FCO, WE UNDERSTAND TO BE FULLY RESPONSIVE TO POLITICAL IMPERATIVES FELT BY HMG ON THIS MATTER. WE ALSO BELIEVE ROSE'S SUGGESTION THAT MANNING BE WORKED OUT ON "SERVICE TO SERVICE" BASIS MAKES GOOD SENSE.

3. EMBASSY CONSIDERS FOREGOING TO BE DEFINITIVE HMG RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSAL RE EXPANSION OF DIEGO GARCIA FACILITY (ROSE AGREED EARLIER THAT FLEXIBILITY OF DIEGO AGREEMENT AND NATURE OF EXPANSION OBVIATE NEED TO CHANGE OR AMEND AGREEMENT) AND FORESEES NO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS IF AND WHEN DEPARTMENT DECIDES MOVE FORWARD ON PROJECT.

ANNENBERG

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